A Nursery Rhyme Story sparked by Hickety Pickety My Black Hen

March 24, 2023

Hello friends, here is a little intro to Nursery Rhymes becoming Stories for Puppetry!

The Nursery Rhymes are true verse from literature that have
endured time, imprinting the lively, rhythmical, alliterative song-like little stories in the hearts and souls of children through time. This gives them additional power in the telling. This is one reason why children love them to be told again and again.

I like to include them in and amongst prose stories to give the children the gifts of the nursery rhyme, along with the gift of a longer story. The children benefit greatly from the rhythmical aspect of the verses, which deepen and regulate wonderful breathing and circulation of the blood. The play of the consonants, which find their best home in the nursery rhymes, will strengthen children's speech muscles and language acquisition.

Sometimes I create a story to expand and highlight a nursery rhyme.
I call them Nursery Rhyme Stories. The following story is one of those

Mama Hen's Surprise

Hickety pickety my black hen,
She lays eggs for gentlemen.
Sometimes nine, sometimes ten,
Hickety pickety my black hen.

Once upon a time, down a lane where primroses grew on each side of the road, there was a little charming farmhouse. It was painted white, and had flower gardens all around it. A gentlewoman farmer lived there, and her name was Henrietta. Henrietta loved to eat eggs for breakfast every day, so she had a roly-poly black hen named Hickety Pickety, who scratched in the dirt, pecked the corn she fed her, sat on her nest, and laid a lovely brown egg faithfully every single day. Henrietta loved Hickety Pickety, treated her very well, and ate her eggs. Sometimes she scrambled them, often she ate them fried with toast, and once in a while, she hard boiled them and ate them with a ripe red tomato!

All went well for Henrietta and her hen for a long time. Then one spring morning the black hen was greeted in the farmyard by her friend Ruddy-duck, who was followed by 6 sweet fluffy yellow ducklings!

'Good Morning Hickety Pickety', quacked Ruddy-duck. 'Look here, these are my new little ducklings who are soft and cuddly. I love being a mama duck! And Ruddy-duck waddled off towards the pond with her little ducklings following behind her.

From that moment on, Hickety Pickety started to feel something warm in her heart. 'Why I want a little chick of my own', she thought to herself!

So the very next day she made a plan. When she laid her egg, she did not save it for Henrietta, instead she tucked it tight under her wing and ran, *tickety tickety* to the big red barn. She made a little straw nest behind the hay bales. It was hidden out of sight under an old upside down wheel barrow. She gently put the egg in the nest. There! Hickety Pickety sat on her egg, and was as happy as could be. Then she ran, *tickety tickety* to the clothesline and peck, pecked off a soft flannel shirt, all warm from the sun. She ran back with it in her beak to the barn and tucked the shirt all around the egg like a blanket.

Here's a shirt so soft and warm.

It will keep you from all harm

Safe inside your nest, nest, nest,

Til I return be blessed, blessed, blessed!"

After a time, Hickety Pickety heard the gentlewoman farmer calling her, so she went as quick as a wink towards the farm yard. Then she started walking slowly, peck, peck, pecking as she walked along. Henrietta looked at her and said, 'my favorite hen! You have no eggs for me today. I will put you in the chicken coop all night until I have an egg to eat for breakfast tomorrow." And so she picked up her black hen and put her in the coop, shut the door, and hooked the latch tight. Henrietta, the gentlewoman farmer yawned, and went along to bed herself.

"Oh no', squawked Hickety Pickety! She went to the latch and set to work!

Peckity peck

Scratch, scratch,

Scratch, scratch,

I'll open the latch!

And she did! Then she ran, *tickety tickety* to the barn to sit on her egg all night long. Early, early morning she tucked the warm shirt over her egg and ran back to the chicken coop just in time to lay an egg for Henrietta.

Hickety Pickety my black hen

She lays eggs for gentlemen,

Sometimes nine, sometimes ten,

Hickety Pickety my black hen.

And so it went, day and night, Hickety Pickety sat on her egg as often as she could, and kept it safe and warm with the flannel shirt blanket when she was in the chicken coop. Until one day.....peck, peck peckpeckpeck, crack! A fuzzy little chick pecked out of the egg!

Hickety Pickety could not believe her eyes, and her heart filled with love.

'Cluck, Cluck, Cluuuuck, she sang to her little chick, who nuzzled closer and closer under her mama's feathers.

Later that day, Mama Hen proudly walked her chick to the farmyard to show her friend Ruddy-duck her own new chick. She did not know that Henrietta the gentlewoman farmer was looking out the kitchen window.

"What's this", Henrietta whispered softly to herself, as she watched for a long time with a big smile on her face.

Henrietta was a kind farmer, and she came to love the little chick, and from that day on she made sure there were many little chicks in the farmyard each spring! That is, as long as she had plenty of eggs to eat too!

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- a tale to tell, by Suzanne Down

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